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(S) NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

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8 August 1979

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

25X1 THRU: [] DEPUTY TO THE DCI FOR RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

SUBJECT: Comments on the Polar Meteorological Satellite Program
Options Paper

The Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) has forwarded a copy of the Polar Meteorological Satellite Program Options paper to all PRC (Space) members for comment. We have reviewed a copy of the paper and offer the following comments.

The potential convergence of the military and civil polar orbiting meteorological satellite programs is of vital concern to the NRO. While the military program, the Defense Meteorological Satellite Program (DMSP), is now a tri-service program, it originated from within the NRO and its highest priority mission is support to the NRP.

The DMSP is now and will be in the future a vital contributor to the overall efficiency of the NRO in providing national intelligence. Of particular importance now and for the next decade is this nation's ability to achieve the maximum capability from our overhead reconnaissance systems to provide adequate monitoring of the SALT II treaty. Any changes which are to be made in the DMSP must not compromise the current level of development and operational responsiveness in support of our national systems and must not allow any degradation in the capability of the NRO systems to monitor the current and future SALT agreements. Since most of the critical design features of the DMSP as well as the specific orbit parameters and mission timelines are driven by the stringent NRO requirements, the continuation of a very responsive development and operations management structure is a critical requirement of the NRO. The firm technical requirements are included in a NRO position paper (Attachment 1).

The OSTP options paper alternatives for changes in program management offer potential dollar savings of around [] over twelve years with associated risks in loss of responsiveness. Since the DMSP driven weather support to the NRO increases the cloud-free-return efficiency of the overhead intelligence systems by from 50 to 100%, the dollar value of the DMSP support to the NRO each year is at least

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NRO review(s) completed.

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the same magnitude as the estimated potential twelve-year savings from further convergence. The intelligence value is even more significant and the attached graph (Attachment 2) illustrates the impact of DMSP on support to the search and surveillance systems.

The further convergence options which significantly alter the present DOD-NRO relationship appear to degrade the current level of design, development and operational responsiveness while offering limited overall dollar savings. However, it does appear that civil user requirements and international agreements could be accommodated without serious risk to the NRO capabilities through alternatives which provide for joint DOD-civil participation while retaining DOD lead in spacecraft development and positive DOD control over at least two satellites continuously on orbit.

In summary, the only options which we recommend you support without concern over the loss of NRP capability would be the dual coordinated, or the fully converged under DOD.

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Attachments

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1. NRO Position Paper
2. Graph

cc:

Mr. Leslie C. Dirks

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NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE
POSITION ON THE CONTROL OF A POST-1985 LOW-ALTITUDE POLAR ORBITING
METEOROLOGICAL SATELLITE PROGRAM

The vital and high priority mission of the National Reconnaissance Program makes timely, responsive, high quality meteorological support an absolute necessity. In order to retain the current level of support the NRO has received from the data provided by the military polar orbiting meteorological satellite program, Defense Meteorological Satellite Program (DMSP), and to insure that future support will be equal to the needs, several constraints must apply to the management of any follow-on program to the current DMSP. The NRO must retain ultimate approval authority over the following for at least two spacecraft continuously in orbit:

a. Primary payload (visual/infrared*) design to include sensor, telemetry and data processing capabilities both in the spacecraft and on the ground.

b. Launch time, orbit parameters, command and control security and coverage selection.

*May include other sensors if designated by the NRO as part of the primary payload, e.g., ionospheric, microwave, etc.

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